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Editorial

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This special issue of the *EJA* is dedicated to the theme of body practices and concepts in later prehistoric Europe. It deals with two overlapping categories of body-related archaeological evidence — mortuary remains and anthropomorphic representations (especially figurines and statue-menhirs) — extending chronologically from the Early Neolithic to the Early Iron Age, and geographically from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Atlantic. Interpretations pay particular attention to the part played by these material things and their makers in the construction of social orders.

The papers published here were kindly commissioned by John Robb (a member of the *EJA*'s Editorial Board), Sheila Kohring and Kirsi Lorentz, who originally organized a session on 'Body Categories, Health and Society in Ancient Europe' at the 18th Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists in Helsinki, where these papers were first presented, prior to their peer review and revision. Below, I briefly summarize and assess their significance.

Goce Naumov explores how physical and metaphorical bodies were represented through human burials at settlements and through figurines and

anthropomorphic house models at different Neolithic sites within the territory of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, including Amazabegovo. Selectivity was central to this social and symbolic process, with infants, sub-adults and females often selected for intramural burial, and body parts selectively represented on anthropomorphic artefacts. Local variability within wider Balkan practices is also highlighted, with complex variations evident in burial type, representation of body parts, and relations with and between anthropomorphic artefact categories. These thought-provoking new patterns in the data now call for further interpretation.

Penny Bickle and Linda Fibiger enrich our understanding of the Early Neolithic *Linearbandkeramik* (LBK) culture of central Europe, with particular reference to child burials. They argue that identities were embodied and performed across the life-course, including during childhood — and especially from 'middle childhood' beginning at the age of about eight — when the contribution of children to the community was acknowledged in mortuary rites. They also note that childhood could be a period of violence and dietary stress — the latter particularly for females, perhaps as they took on gender-specific diets. This interesting paper reminds us not to overlook the significance of childhood in the past; it could also stimulate new discussions, both on how childhood may have been experienced and perceived in the LBK, and on how archaeologists might reinterpret child burial data.

Also dealing with mortuary remains, Kirsi Lorentz explores how the intentional manipulation of dead bodies and human remains at cemeteries in Chalcolithic Cyprus — and especially at Souskiou-*Laona* —helped to create and reinforce social categories and identities. She argues that such practices — performed at the time of death and on successive occasions — were aimed at socially integrating individuals into communal wholes. Further contextualisation of these mortuary

practices will hopefully follow soon with the publication of the Souskiou-*Laona* monograph, which is currently in preparation.

Sheila Kohring develops a theoretical perspective on the construction of physical and conceptual body images in prehistoric Europe, drawing upon three examples of statue-menhirs from the island of Guernsey. She argues that choices about what materials and techniques were used to make these potent material representations of the human body, and the settings of the finished objects, reflect past orderings and categorizations of the human body. In so doing, Kohring presents a fresh perspective on the relationship between making, materials, embodiment and knowledge about the body.

Similarly, Susanna Harris and Kerstin Hofmann examine how Copper Age statue-menhirs in northern Italy and the Swiss Valais were made and gendered. With reference to stone reduction sequences, they argue that the selection of particular stones and bodily features (including body size and shape, heads, arms, breasts, clothing, weapons and ornaments) was central to this process. They also identify regional variations in how bodily gender categories were represented. In addition to these theoretical considerations, an important original contribution of this paper is its examination of the steps involved in the manufacture of statue-menhirs.

António Valera and Lucy Shaw Evangelista focus attention on a particular kind of anthropomorphic figurine from the Perdigões enclosure complex in southern Portugal. This set of figurines is dated to the Late Chalcolithic and is only associated with cremated human remains. The objects are made of ivory, found whole, and represent human body form and posture in a more naturalistic and standardized manner than the predominant schematic figurine tradition, out of which this new form develops. The authors argue that this new type of representation was used, at a time of

significant cultural change, to communicate and control new ideological statements — about the social role of male individuals, for example. This is an intriguing idea, even if one might wish to debate the degree of agency ascribed to this small group of figurines.

Nona Palincaş focusses attention on the manipulated (inhumed, fragmented, cremated and even eaten) human remains found at a variety of sites of the Middle Bronze Age Wietenberg culture in Transylvania. She hypothesizes that, instead of simply representing an attempt to do away with the physical body at death, this carefully managed symbolic treatment of the human body actively helped people understand their place in the world, assisted the maintenance of social order, and even contributed to its renegotiation, at a time of increasing settlement mobility and social stratification. The merit of this paper lies in the attempt to create order out of the disparate mortuary evidence, although one should bear in mind the relatively limited dataset of mortuary remains and studies currently available for this large region.

Marta Díaz-Guardamino explores both funerary practices and the making of stelae and statue-menhirs in Bronze Age and Early Iron Age western Iberia. Drawing upon current anthropological thought, she argues that these practices entailed the creation and commemoration of the living, the dead and the ancestors: not as bounded and independent beings (such as individual, elite, male warriors), but as 'relational' entities involving whole communities (including ritual specialists, mourners, craftspeople, families, their deceased relatives, and so on). In this way, Díaz-Guardamino breathes new life into the study of Iberian stelae and statue-menhirs.

In addition to these papers, we include four book reviews. The first commends Michael Shanks' latest challenging book. The others offer a mixture of praise and thoughtful criticism for an edited volume on caves and rockshelters in Europe, a guidebook on the archaeology of Albania, and an edited volume on the history of archaeological research and thought in the context of the Ottoman Empire.

If you are interested in submitting an article on any aspect of European archaeology, or have recently published a book that you would like us to review, or have a suggestion for a special issue of the *EJA*, do please get in touch with a member of our editorial team or visit us on http://www.maney.co.uk/index.php/journals/eja/.